### **Readings for March 16, 2025 -- Second Sunday in Lent**

Jesus, Our Dazzling Light

### *Jesus is about to face the most trying period of his human life. Along this road that leads to Calvary, he allows us to have a “mountaintop” experience of seeing the complete glory of God -- the fulfillment of a heavenly plan that reaches back to Adam and includes Moses and Elijah. How can we “listen to him” and be more aware of the dazzling glory of God all around us?*

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### **Opening Prayer:** Lord, show us the light of your face. Help us to see and hear you today. Amen.

**Reading 1 GN 15:5-12, 17-18**

The Lord God took Abram outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can.

Just so," he added, "shall your descendants be." Abram put his faith in the LORD,

who credited it to him as an act of righteousness. He then said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land as a possession." "O Lord GOD," he asked, "how am I to know that I shall possess it?"

He answered him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old she-goat,

a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." Abram brought him all these, split them in two,

and placed each half opposite the other; but the birds he did not cut up.

Birds of prey swooped down on the carcasses, but Abram stayed with them.

As the sun was about to set, a trance fell upon Abram, and a deep, terrifying darkness enveloped him.

When the sun had set and it was dark, there appeared a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch,

which passed between those pieces. It was on that occasion that the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Great River, the Euphrates."

#### **Responsorial Psalm PS 27:1, 7-8, 8-9, 13-14.**

**R. (1a) The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

The LORD is my light and my salvation;

whom should I fear? The LORD is my life's refuge; of whom should I be afraid?

**R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

Hear, O LORD, the sound of my call; have pity on me, and answer me.

Of you my heart speaks; you my glance seeks.

**R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

Your presence, O LORD, I seek.

Hide not your face from me; do not in anger repel your servant. You are my helper: cast me not off.

**R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

I believe that I shall see the bounty of the LORD

in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD with courage; be stouthearted, and wait for the LORD.

**R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.**

#### **Reading 2 PHIL 3:17—4:1**

#### Join with others in being imitators of me, brothers and sisters, and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us. For many, as I have often told you and now tell you even in tears, conduct themselves as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction. Their God is their stomach; their glory is in their "shame." Their minds are occupied with earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we also await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord.

#### **Gospel LK 9:28B-36**

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray.

While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white.

And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah,

who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.

Peter and his companions had been overcome by sleep, but becoming fully awake,

they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.

As they were about to part from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here;

let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

But he did not know what he was saying. While he was still speaking,

a cloud came and cast a shadow over them, and they became frightened when they entered the cloud.

Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him."

After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They fell silent and did not at that time tell anyone what they had seen.

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Related Reflections

**Take courage:** This account of the Transfiguration is an intimation of Easter five weeks from now. We are weak-hearted and basically timid and fearful folk. Oftentimes, even by the second week of Lent, we’re ready to give up. This Sunday is for courage, blessing, encouragement, and a moment of prayer, an experience of the glory of the Lord, of revelation for all us faint-hearted folk.

It is for us when we act like Peter, wanting it easy, wanting to stay with glory, wanting to stay with our limited and oftentimes off-base assumptions about what is going on. It is a time for God to interrupt and once again tell us: “This is my beloved on whom my favor rests – the favor of grace, spirit, justice, care for the poor, obedience. Listen to him and not to anyone else.”

From Megan McKenna*, Lent: Reflections and Stories.*

Sometimes, without knowing it or even being aware of it, we can get locked into our own world and our particular situation. We can lose sight of the fact that we are part of a much bigger world. In the gospel, Jesus takes some of his friends away from the business of the village and market place. He invites them to travel with him as he makes his way up the mountain.

This is not unusual. We know from the gospels that Jesus often went off by himself to the mountains to pray. While they were there praying something wild and wonderful happened. Jesus was *transfigured;* he was changed; *his face shone like the son, and his clothes became as white as light.*Imagine how surprised, shocked and taken aback those with Jesus were.

Once composed, Peter utters the famous words, *‘Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here’.*But more importantly than what was said, is what they heard; *‘This is my Son, the beloved, he enjoys my favour, listen to him’.*

These words are as much meant for us today as they were for those who first heard them. Today, we are surrounded if not bombarded by news all the time. Not all of it is good news; some of it may even be fake news. The word and message that Jesus speaks to us and offers is life-giving and life-changing. The words of Jesus, nourish, nurture, and sustain and us, if we open our hearts and lives to hearing it. As John’s gospel reminds us, *Lord, you have the message of eternal life.*

The Transfiguration gives us a brief and fleeting glimpse of Jesus in all his glory. It is a taste of what is to come. It is offered to encourage and challenge us in our daily lives. It reminds us that our lives are far more than what see, hear and experience every day. It is not just a matter of getting through the day. Being a follower of Jesus is about living with meaning, purpose and hope. The transfiguration not only offers us a glimpse of Jesus in all his glory, it also offers each of us a foretaste of what God promises each of us in the fullness of the Kingdom.

We may never experience anything as powerful as the Transfiguration. But every day in countless and seemingly small ways God does break into our world and our daily lives. Every time we experience a moment of peace, joy, reconciliation or forgiveness, God is with us. Every time that we reach out to help another person is a moment of transfiguration both for ourselves and for those we help. Each time somebody shows care and concern for us is a moment when God is reaches out to us.

This week, let us open our hearts so that we may hear Jesus speaking to us. May we slow down and look for moments of small but important times of transfiguration in our own ordinary daily lives.

 Michael Moore OMI - published on <https://oblates.ie/gospel-reflection-transfiguration-jesus/>

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For Jesus, the events leading up to his crucifixion may have been as painful emotionally as the dying itself – betrayal, misunderstanding, abuse and desolation. The seeming absence of God the Father in the most crucial hour of his life must have been excruciating for one so intimately united to the divine. These experiences deepened Jesus’ faithfulness and his perseverance in the journey of the Spirit. He invited a few of the apostles into this profound moment of revelation.

The Transfiguration is an incredible blessing, filling Jesus with the support, grace, and inspiration he needed to walk those difficult final days. Jesus is affirmed by the great figures of his tradition, who represent the law and the prophets. Even though he will be rejected by the representatives in his day of religious and civil law and the prophetic tradition, he is held up by the wisdom figures of ancient times. This illumination will have to carry him through the dark days of confusion, insecurity, and terror that will begin as soon as he comes down the mountain.

Each of us needs touchstones, or special memories, to return to when we face the crosses in our journey. These “God-moments” may be more subtle than a transfiguration on a mountaintop, but their impact can help us if we recognize them. We can remember these touchstone events when we reflect on the ways in which we have been inspired at other times of trial.

Personal “transfigurations” may reveal themselves when we begin to share our story of struggle and faith. What has sustained us in trial can continue to do so if we allow ourselves to savor them later on! God’s revelation continues in each re-visitation of gratitude and marvel.

 ***Prayer Time, Cycle C, Faith-Sharing Reflections on the Gospel, Renew International***

**The ‘beauty’ of love – From Pope Francis**

In this Gospel passage, Peter and James, and his brother John witness Christ “transfigured before them” with his face shining “like the sun” and his clothes “dazzling white” as he conversed with Moses and Elijah on the top of a mountain.

Pope Francis said that we must “see the same beauty on the faces of the people who walk beside us every day,” such as family, friends, and colleagues.

“How many luminous faces, how many smiles, how many wrinkles, how many tears and scars reveal love around us,” the pope said.

“Let us learn to recognize them and to fill our hearts with them. And then let us set out in order to bring the light we have received to others as well, through concrete acts of love diving into our daily occupations more generously, loving, serving, and forgiving with greater earnestness and willingness,” the Holy Father said. “The contemplation of God’s wonders, the contemplation of God’s face, of the Lord’s face, must move us to the service of others.”

“Of what does this beauty consist? What do the disciples see? A special effect? No, that is not it.

“They see the light of God’s holiness shining on the face and on the clothing of Jesus, the perfect image of the Father,”

 (Pope Francis, *Angelus* - March 5, 2023)

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***Related Scripture: (From Psalm 4)***

“Lord, show us the light of your face!”

Know that the Lord works wonders for his faithful one; the Lord hears when I call out to him.

In peace I will lie down and fall asleep, for you alone, Lord, make me secure.

“Lord, show us the light of your face!”

***Suggested Meditation:***

Look at the suggestions below silently for 5-10 minutes. Write down any thoughts that might come up. Share with the group, if you are willing.

The disciples caught a glimpse of Jesus’ divinity that changed how they would think and relate to him. There are moments when we, too, catch glimpses of the divine. Those glimpses change how we understand God and how we relate to one another:

* What comes to mind when I think about Jesus, transfigured in full divine glory? How can I also be a light for others?
* Reflect back on the last few days (or maybe farther back in the past). Where have I glimpsed God in the people and events around me?
* Does seeing the power and divinity of Jesus in our own lives change the way we think of him and relate to him? In what ways?
* Pope Francis says this: “In his transfiguration, Jesus invited three of his disciples to watch him. Do you ask yourself each night when you saw Jesus during the day?”

Discussion Questions

In the second reading (a letter of St. Paul to the Philippians), we hear a warning against being occupied too much with “earthly things.” What kinds of things might we be caught up with today?

How does that impact our ability to “be imitators” of St. Paul, and of Jesus? How does this fit with our overall theme of trying to find more “desert places” in our lives?

Jesus *tells* the disciples about what is coming (his rejection, death and resurrection), but gives Peter, James, and John *an experience* of his glory. How do you think this experience might have impacted the disciples? Have you ever had an experience of God that changed you in a meaningful way or that you maybe didn’t understand more fully until later in life?

Do you think this revelation of Jesus’ glory was meant to console his friends? How can this be a consoling piece of scripture for me too? How can it help to relieve my fears, and help me to move forward more confidently on my faith journey?

In the Transfiguration, the disciples were invited to behold Jesus in his glory -- to stop talking and listen to him. Do I take time to really stop talking and do some deep listening? How can I improve on this?

Jesus allowed this glimpse of his transfigured self to people who would carry on his work (prophets from the past, as well as his disciples). What do you think that says to us? Are we also prophets for each other?

Does this vision of the full glory of Jesus give us consolation in managing our desert places in life?

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**Closing Prayer:**

On the mountain you were transfigured, O Christ God,
And your disciples beheld your glory as far as they were able
So that when they would behold You crucified,
They would understand that Your suffering was voluntary,
And would proclaim to the world,
That You are truly the radiance of the Father.

Thank you for this glimpse of pure divinity – this gift that we can radiate to others. Amen.

Weekly Focus Questions:

What was my “desert place” this week?

Was I able to see something new and green springing forth from this?

Also:

*Thin places: Sometimes circumstances conspire to remind us or even let us glimpse how thin the membrane is between birth and the grave, between the human and the divine. (Anne Lamott)*